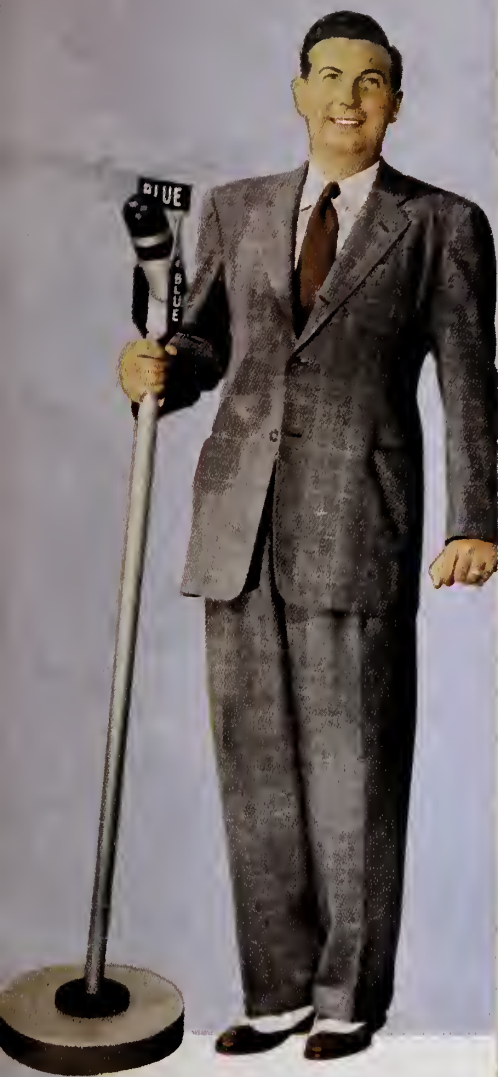




Don's Other Life

By the First Lady
of the Breakfast Club,

Kay McNeill

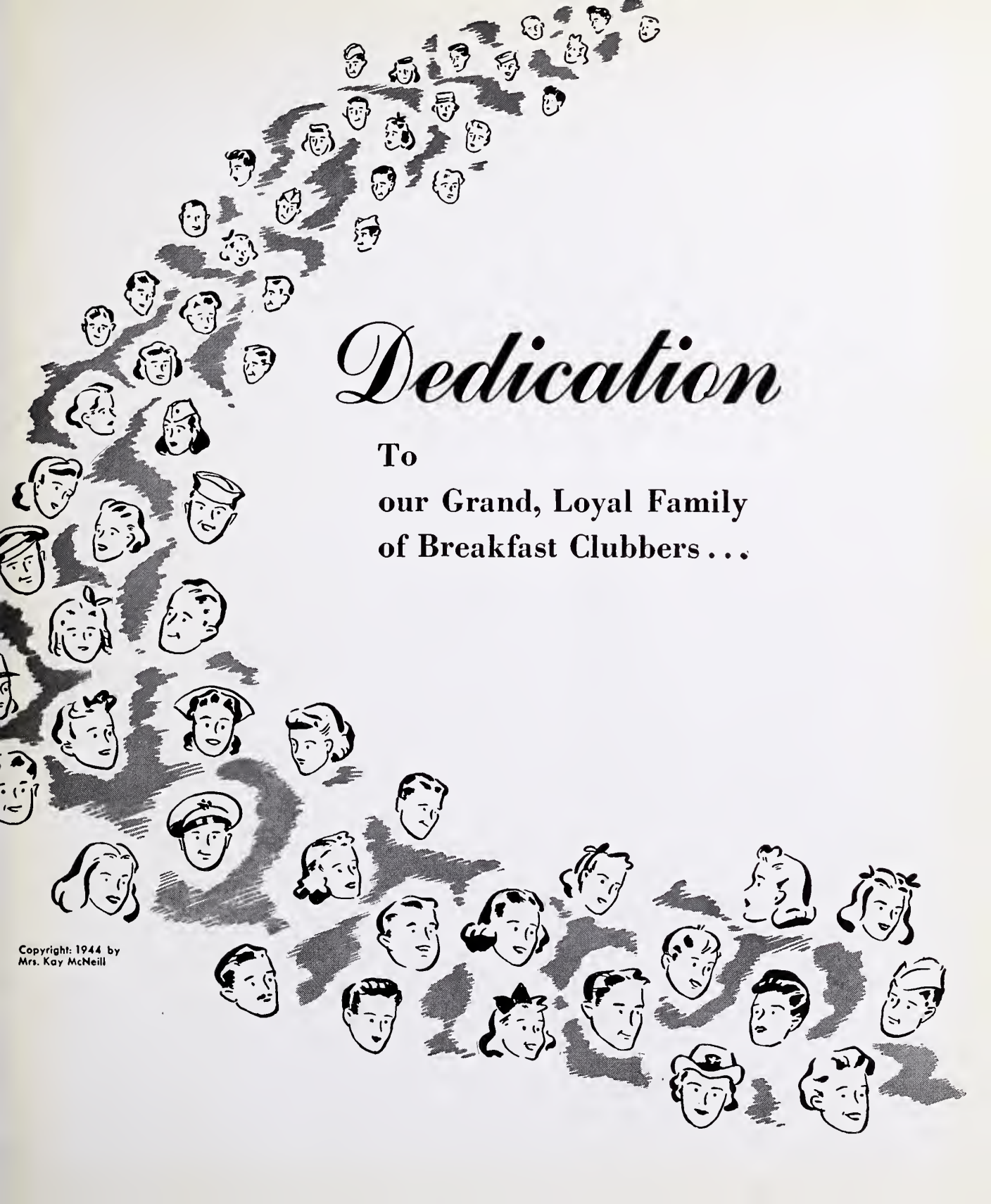
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Dedication

To
our Grand, Loyal Family
of Breakfast Clubbers . . .

Copyright: 1944 by
Mrs. Kay McNeill

OH KAY! YOU TELL 'EM

(OR ONE IN A MILLION)



by Don

There are millions of happy families in these United States. The McNeills are one of these.

But all American families don't have books written about them. Of course, the bread winners in most families work at least eight hours a day, garden or golf for relaxation, and enjoy the companionship of friends and neighbors after hours.

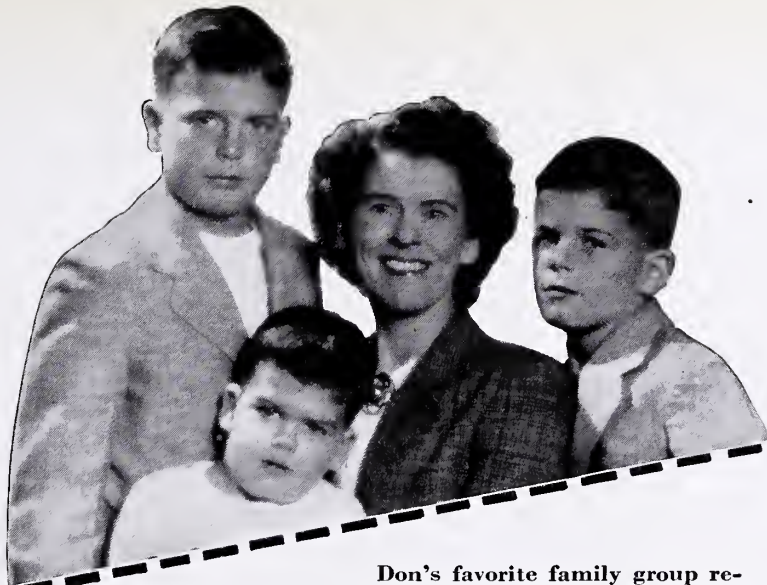
That is where the McNeills differ. You must know by this time that my only means of support is to stand from 8 a. m. to 9 a. m., six mornings a week, in front of a Blue Network microphone in the Chicago Merchandise Mart studio. I don't do too much gardening and I seldom play golf. Our friends and neighbors avoid us after ten o'clock in the evening.

"Well, *this is* a queer family," you say. "He must be a strange creature to live with. How do poor Mrs. McNeill and the children stand it?"

And, your remarks are echoed by millions of other Breakfast Club fans.

It would hardly do for me to expose the routine which has been the source of so much happiness to us in the last eleven years. You'd be inclined to think it was another Breakfast Club gag.

I have the notion, though, that you will listen to Mrs. McNeill—Kay. I've been doing it for years.



Don's favorite family group reveals Tommy on my right, Donny on my left, with Bobby on my lap. It flatters all of us except Bobby.

This is the story of an M. C.'s wife. It starts with a typical day in the McNeill household. Getting Don off to the studio, or more important, getting him up at 5:40 a. m., six mornings a week, requires the combined efforts of the four of us.

Then from eight to nine we relax. Sometimes Don relaxes, too, but most of the time he really sweats to please his Breakfast Club audience. Sometimes he pleases us.

What does Don do with all his time? What kind of a man is he to live with?

These two questions are asked most frequently by Breakfast Club fans. Before the mail reached the 9,000 letters a month classification, we used to try to answer most of the questions. Now it is impossible, but we believe this book will serve as an answer to your questions about the private life of a radio wife.

Let's look at the man first. That is a favorite female beginning. You Breakfast Clubbers really make him tick. We just wind him up six mornings a week and hope that he has a main spring left when he checks in late in the afternoon.

What happens to him while he is away from the fireside would fill a book. And that's exactly what I'm going to do . . . fill this book with his long and shortcomings and embellish it with the most popular contributions we've received since The Breakfast Club Family Album was published.

Key McNeill

DON YAWN! You can stop right now envying the gay, sparkling personality who greets you each morning with that cheery "Good Morning, Breakfast Clubbers, good morning to yah."



He didn't inherit it, he acquired it after many long years of practice. The photographs on this page are pretty true to life. He is the original "Don Yawn" when the boys, our dog—"Fellow,"—and I descend on him at 5:40 each morning.





ONE HAM'S FAMILY

... "We got up bright and early to how-dy do yah."

Don had the boys in mind when he put this thought into the second line of his "First Call to Breakfast."

The boys are always the first ones up in the morning. It is not uncommon to hear Tommy and Donny arguing at 5:30 a. m., whether to take a bath or a shower.

Bobby, age 3½, is custodian of Don's shaving and dressing mood. He keeps talking to him while he shaves and always appears at the Breakfast table well-lathered and liberally sprinkled with shaving lotion.

All of us try to contribute something to Don's early morning mood. While he's eating breakfast, I tell him of some silly dream I had. My favorite is the night I was frightened by a queer noise. Quickly turning on the light, I discovered a pair of man's legs sticking out from beneath the bed. But, it wasn't a burglar, it was Don... he'd heard the noise first.

We usually breakfast together, but the morning this photograph was taken Don was on a bond tour. Clockwise we are Donny, Bobby, Kay and Tommy enjoying that well-known breakfast cereal.

Donny has a new story almost every morning. He particularly likes the one about the little moron who stood on the street corner with a knife in one hand and a gun in the other... undecided whether to cut across the street or shoot up the alley.

Tommy's conversation is usually a matter of dollars, more than sense. He always needs money for something important like a baseball mitt. Every morning Bobby inquires, "Is that a new tie you're wearing, Daddy?" One morning Bobby was making a whirring noise and Don said "Bob—you're a big airplane." Bob thought it over and said "Dad, you're a big silly man."

By the time Don is ready to sprint for the train, he's a complete wreck but laughing at the top of his voice.

And that's the way one ham's family primes your Breakfast Club "messenger of ceremonies".

SO BEGINS ANOTHER DAZE...



At Home we settle down to a routine that varies only with the season. The boys land out-of-doors no later than 7:15. Fortunately, our closest neighbor has two boys whose Daddy has to catch an early suburban train to the city. Ethel, who is mother's helper, and I pick up the breakfast dishes and slick up the kitchen. Then we are ready to listen.

His most critical audience responds to the oft-asked question: "What do you say about your daddy's show?" with:



Tommy, age 10, at the window: "Well, at least he brings home the bacon."

Donny, age 8, "I think what Daddy does is better than working."

Bobby, age 3½, "My male parent has a tremendous following and I will purposely model my adolescent life after his matutinal activities. I say this in all sincerity and with full realization of its consequences."

Ha! Ha! Ha!



"Is it March Time
Yet, Mother?"

... In the Studio

We did a good job this morning, for note the aplomb with which he greets his audience as they line the corridor outside Studio A waiting for the doors to open at 7:45 a. m.

During the summer months the studio, which seats approximately 600, is never large enough to accommodate the audience. Even in winter, they struggle through Chicago's icy blasts to attend the show.



The informality of the show extends even to the seating arrangement. This photograph happens to show Don interviewing Roy Rogers of Hollywood—Horse opera fame. Men, women and babes-in-arms surround the gang as they work on a raised platform. Small fry and the orchestra complete the encirclement.

Isn't he a scream? Someone has dipped deep enough into the gag barrel to give you this handsome display of Breakfast Club molars. In case you haven't been introduced, these B. C. principals are: (left to right) Helen Parker, a guest; Marion Mann, Charles Irving (who dishes out those swell commercials) Jack Owens, Don and Sam Cowling.



THE MERRY - GO - ROUND



Yes, they really march around the breakfast table during March Time. We hope you join them. Right now Donny is marching around the living room shouting at the top of his lungs while I am trying to write this. Excuse me a minute.

"Donny, why are you shouting in that horrible fashion? Why can't you be quiet like Tom?"

"He's got to be quiet, Mom, the way we are playing. He's Daddy coming home late and I am you."

It's marvelous when you think of the forward, progressive strides this country has made in the last 25 years. The automobile, the airplane, the radio, television and now the most progressive step and certainly the most forward—the Cruising Crooner!

Girls, you must hear as well as see Jack Owens to appreciate him, but this action picture gives you ideas.

. . . A. M. MAYHEM

Anything can happen and usually does. Pity this poor child who has been asked to name her favorite breakfast food. Fortunately, she came up with the right answer. Sam and Don knocked each other out reporting the incident to the sponsor.

"What's Kogen, Harry?" And Harry Kogen, talented maestro, replies to Don's pun with a magic baton that swings the famous Breakfast club orchestra into a choice Kogen orchestration.



MORE MERRY . . .

Whenever I see a picture of Nancy Martin I am always reminded of the discussion she and Don had one morning about time-savers. Don had just recited how he saved precious minutes in the morning by putting a zipper on his washrag so he could zip it apart and wash both cars at the same time and how he always rubbed his eyes and stretched the night before so he wouldn't have to bother with that upon awakening, when Nancy broke in with:

"I have the greatest time-saver of all."

"What's that?" innocently questioned Don.

"Love at first sight."

The bearded one listening to Nancy's song was attending the Lion's Convention. Looks more like a wolf, doesn't he?



A Romeo on the loose! In this instance, Sam Cowling, a long-time member of the Three Romeos and a newly-discovered heckler for Don, is searching the studio audience for an honest face.

Looks to me like Sam's youthful Diogenes better have a written excuse for missing that first morning class.

Sam came up with a choice "Fiction and Fact" that morning—Remember: "In spite of the shortage of tropical foods . . . just by glaring at our orchestra leader . . . you can get Kogen-nuts."



. . . MAYHEM

Marion Mann, the lovely vocalist who alternates with Nancy Martin on your Breakfast Club, is always in demand by the studio audience. Jack Maey, the tennis pro, holds Marion's most valued autograph—her signature to a marriage contract.

Frequently, autograph seekers will hand a blank cheek to a member of the cast. The peculiar part of this is that each person who does it, thinks he or she is the first one who thought of it. Either the casts' signatures are not too highly thought of by banks, or the bank clerks keep them as souvenirs, because, they're never heard from afterwards.

How can Don think of such quick answers to interviews? We are asked this question frequently.

I tell Don it's a gift, and he said, "If it is, I should give it back."

Don really expects his audience to help him create a new program each day. There is no monotony on the show for the program is life itself and no life is monotonous. Each day brings a different group of people into the studio and something unusual is bound to happen.

Remember the day the lady said she had tried to visit the show once before but was detoured on the way in order to have her baby?



AFTER THE BRAWL IS OVER . . . *The Audience*

Takes Charge



With the show over, Don and the rest of the cast spend a lot of time shaking hands with people, talking to them and autographing. About 9:30 he is ready for another breakfast. Usually some servicemen or women are his guests. Then he goes to his office in the Merchandise Mart.

A common query is: "What does Don think of people?"

I think the Breakfast Club program proves that Don likes people. He responds nimbly to the moods of all about him and he is called "friend" by thousands in all walks of life.



Breakfast Clubbers show little partiality when it comes to collecting autographs. All the principals go through the same routine once the show is off the air. Naturally, they love it, for it is one of the few measuring sticks they have to test whether or not they are pleasing you with their efforts.



Our old friend, Jack Owens, is back. Mrs. Ora Chidester of San Diego, Calif., summed up our sentiments when she wrote: "I have missed you from the West Coast program, so I am delighted to know you will continue to call from Chicago. You, of course, cannot take Jack Baker's place, but you have a place of your own to fill equally well. There is only one Jack Baker and the mold was broken after he was cast. It is so much easier to have a friend sit in his chair and in time we will love you as we now love Jack Baker. Each of us must move on to make a place for another as worthy or more so. Jack's going has made your coming possible."



THEY BEHAVE . . . *Like Gentlemen in Public*

Proof that our husbands are always welcome around the Breakfast Table is apparent when they mingle with the public. Here they are entertaining the wives of delegates attending the Lions' International convention in Chicago.

But, would you please look at our friends when they are alone. Corn and pep, of course, are so important to their daily show I suppose we shouldn't complain. It's certainly strange, though, how easy it is for them to act NATURAL—like Crumbs Around the Breakfast Table.





MEANWHILE A SHRUB GROWS IN WINNETKA

My day is typical of any housewife who has three growing boys, a suburban home, a dog and a pet husband.

There are times, of course, when Don and I entertain guests and visitors in the city or invite them out to Winnetka, but on the whole we live a normal, suburban life. Early to bed, and early to rise, with not many a surprise.

As the Breakfast Club draws to a close during the school year, there is always a rush to get Tommy and Donny off on time. Then there are errands to run in the village, purchases to make for lunch and dinner, and telephone calls galore.

By lunch time the housework is pretty well completed, so that I can spend some time with the boys. Bobby, naturally, gets most of my attention in the afternoon, for the older boys are busy bike riding, playing games, or "shooting Japs."





Don arrives home about four o'clock unless he has an evening appointment. He usually rests for a while or clutters up the boys' play by trying some new Breakfast Club gag on them.

You'll be greatly disappointed, I am afraid, when I tell you how we spend our evenings. After dinner, Ethel and I wash the dishes. By the time the boys have had their baths and are in bed it is after eight-thirty.

I usually find Don in the library, his face buried in a newspaper or a mystery story. So, I go into the closet, get a bag of socks, overalls and shorts that need mending. About nine-fifteen or nine-thirty, Don will say he is going to bed. I either keep on with my mending for another hour or so, or do likewise.

Once in a while we do go out and take in a movie . . . the last one we saw was called "Birth of a Nation" and they tell me the talkies are very good, so I told Don we must see one some of these days.

We very seldom spend the evening with celebrities and you could count on the fingers of one hand the times we have visited a night club. I think maybe we're just a too-typical American family.



OFF THE AIR . . .

Another program is born



Being spontaneously funny is exhausting work. Add the high jinks and gymnastics which are so characteristic of a Breakfast Club program and you can just see the picture of Sam and Jack helping Don into his office come to life.

Once behind his desk there are a thousand and one details to be attended to. The morning mail gets first consideration. In this department, Mary Canny, Don's pretty secretary, efficiently directs the flow of humorous, whimsical, pathetic and even crazy requests and demands that pour across his desk.

Meanwhile, **Jim Bennett**—Don's personal representative—gives the telephone a workout as he arranges for guest interviews, personal appearances, tours, tickets, contracts, and the myriad details involved in operating the show off the air, behind the scenes.



Don is quick to acknowledge the talents of his gang. They are a veteran and versatile cast of ad-libbers who know how to keep the ball in the air. At least once a day Sam Cowling and Jack Owens, or both, breeze in with an idea. Sam's idea seems to be getting rough treatment in the "gag conference" illustrated here, but corn always has first choice on the program.

It's just like Don says: "There is no such thing as an old story; if you haven't heard it, it's new."

Jack broke up this conference with the appropriate remark: "These gags, Don, are certainly terrific weapons to kill time with."

No rehearsal today, except of musical numbers, is the usual Breakfast Club motto. The orchestra and the singers usually rehearse for forty-five to sixty minutes after the gang has had its breakfast. Most hour-long radio programs require from ten to thirty hours of rehearsal, but Don and his gang appear for an actual broadcast just a quarter to a half hour before air time. To the right, Eddie Ballantine, Jack, and the orchestra are going over a tune.

The only prepared material which Don brings into the studio is the selected prose and poetry he intends to read during "Memory Time" and "Inspiration Time". Commercials and Government messages, of course, are prepared in advance.

Outside of that Don keeps a notebook with gags, letters from listeners, etc. in front of him and refers to it from time to time during the broadcast. The rest of the show is in the "lap of the gods."

Miss Lopez speaking! is the greeting most Breakfast Clubbers receive when they telephone to inquire about tickets for the show. And here is the pretty little lady—smiling voice and all—observed through the glass windowed reception room of the Blue Network's program division on the 18th floor of the Merchandise Mart.

One of her principal duties is to dispense all the admission tickets to the Breakfast Club, most of which are requested weeks in advance.



Blue NETWORK

PROGRAM DIVISION



Script Teasers... *or how a Breakfast Club Program is put together, according to:*



Don: Contributions form a large share of the grist that runs through the Breakfast Club mill, but it still is a tough grind. No one knows how I have slaved and toiled from early morn 'till late at night. And no one knows how many years the Breakfast Club has taken out of my night life. Just think, eleven years! 4,015 nights!



Kay: If nothing more, this book should prove who really writes the Breakfast Club programs. I'm not referring to inspirational values alone, for they are very apparent. I'm talking about the bon mot and the belles lettres which abound within those covers,—don't you think?



Jim Bennett: You can talk all you want about the wonderful interviews and clever situations which evolve during a Breakfast Club broadcast. But, remember it takes people to make these appearances and situations. I'm the guy who digs them up, drags them in and draws them out. Mr. McNeill calls me his personal representative, but of course he is being modest for I represent people—other than whom there are none funnier.



Mary Canny: Due to circumstancees beyond my control, I am unable to release a carefully prepared statement for this edition. The reasons are quite obvious. I love my work, the hours and pay are good, and Mr. McNeill is a fine man to work for. But, I can't help wondering,—what would happen to the Breakfast Club if I didn't keep the notebook up to date?

Lou Green, Producer: It's time to break my silence. Don insists that I occupy a seat in the control booth at each and every broadcast and that I use a carefully arranged system of hand signals to prompt him over the rough spots. Watch for these signals the next time you attend a Breakfast Club broadcast. I'm to Don McNeill what the ventriloquist is to the dummy.



LOU GREEN

KERMIT SLOBB

Kermit Slobb, Engineer: Can you imagine anything worse than a dead mike? Oh, sure! Some of McNeill's gags ooze out over the ether now and then, but, if it wasn't for our control board, which filters the good from the bad, you wouldn't be able to stand the B. C. as a daily diet.

Herman, Elevator Starter: You can paste this in your album. Every good joke McNeill ever had on the Breakfast Club he got from me. That's why he spends so much time riding up and down these Mart Elevators—hoping to catch me in a weak moment.

Archie Sweet, Janitor: That's gratitude for you. I have a chance to do some authorizing and they gag me before I start. And here I've been letting Mr. McNeill use my broom to sweep up the studio ever since I told him I found a dollar bill on the floor after one of the broadcasts! Professional jealousy, that's what I calls it.

Sponsors: All together, boys, let's give it to him. Don McNeill, we absolutely refuse to admit that it takes super salesmanship to peddle our products . . . but, we think it helps. More super to you.



ARCHIE SWEET

THE TRUE STORY . . . *B. C. Programs Depend On*



MUSICAL FINESSE

HARRY KOGEN, maestro of the Breakfast Club orchestra, grew up with radio. And each broadcast adds stature to his height, for his versatile musical experience and his intimate knowledge of all types of music—from swing to grand opera—particularly fits him for the niche he fills so well on the Breakfast Club.

Harry joined the Blue network in 1928 after conducting a band in a Chicago theater. Thus, 16 years ago, he became one of the pioneer conductors of radio.

He traces his precision handling of the baton and his military bearing to the service he gave his country in the last war. Harry likes to play chess by mail and has published several collections of new and old tunes, especially arranged for string quartet.

REHEARSAL

The hard-working, talented boys of the orchestra are the first to arrive in the studio in the morning and the last to leave. They rehearse with the B. C. vocalists for about an hour each day, usually from 10 a.m. to 11.

Our cameraman caught them here in the studio reviewing the score for the day under the watchful eyes of Rex Maupin, who often leads the orchestra, and Jack Owens while the audience files in to enjoy another musical treat, garnished with nuts.



PERSONALITY

JACK OWENS, since April 24, 1944, has been back home on the Breakfast Club. Nearly all listeners know that he replaced Jack Baker as the singing star of the show on that day. Not so many, however, remember that Owens' fine baritone voice was heard regularly on the Breakfast Club from 1934 through 1936.

He brings to the program the smart Hollywoodian trick of crooning tender phrases directly to women guests while he cruises through the audience. Hence, the sobriquet of "The Cruising Crooner."

From 1936 to his return to Chicago, Owens supplied the unseen singing voice of Jimmy Stewart, James Ellison, and other Hollywood stars. In his spare time he has turned out such smash hits as "Hi, Neighbor," "Louisiana Lullaby," and "The Hut Sut Song."

Jack and his charming wife with their three children—Mary Ann 9, Johnny 6, and Noel 3, for a time occupied Jack Baker's home on Chicago's near north side, until the question of rent came up.

SPONTANEITY

JACK BAKER, who is now stationed in Springfield, Missouri, served you Breakfast Clubbers with a finely balanced menu of favorite ballads and exchanged rapid-fire ad libs with Don for eight years. His infant son John Willard arrived on June 24, so the "Louisiana Lark" really has something to warble about now.

On his first visit to Chicago since leaving the show Jack observed Jack, sur-named Owens, crooning sweet nothings to pretty young girls in the audience and was heard to comment: "What a racket! Why didn't I think of that?"

Don't worry, Baker-boy, you thought of plenty and I am sure we'll never forget your infectious spontaneity, cigars, chewing gum, and masterful jitterbugging. Good Luck and God Speed!



GLAMOUR

NANCY MARTIN preferred radio to her schoolmarm job in the West Virginia hills, so what was education's loss became radio's gain. Since 1939 when she left Pittsburgh radio for Chicago, this pert little songbird has charmed Breakfast Clubbers.

The glamour that is found in Nancy's voice is not of the textbook variety, but there is a lot of "larning" in the little lady. She is a very accomplished pianist and her favorite pastime is to dash off a lilting little song in collaboration with one of the B. C. gang. Just recently she and Eddie Ballantine co-authored a WAC ballad in honor of the khaki-clad members of her sex.

Don kids her a lot about liking men—especially those in uniform, and maybe he's right, because one day recently on the Breakfast Club, Don said, "This morning Nancy says she'd like to kiss every man, woman, and child as they leave the studio."

Nancy promptly replied: "Oh Don I did not—say anything about women and children."



APPEAL

MARION MANN can put an inflection in her singing voice that makes all the Breakfast Club's shut-in listeners sit up and take notice. And no wonder they find Marion's voice appealing, for when she dedicates a number to the shut-ins she is singing from experience.

She was graduated from high school in Columbus, Ohio and filled local radio engagements before getting her big chance to sing at the Shrine Temple at Harrisburg, Pa. En route, an automobile accident occurred and Marion had to wait in a hospital a full year for another chance.

Opportunities came fast, for in rapid sequence she sang with Emerson Gill's band in Cleveland, appeared with Richard Himber and his band in a movie, and was settling down for a singing career with Bob Crosby when Dan Cupid walked in. She gave up the band business to marry Jack Macy, but because radio has the lucky quality of allowing one to live a home life and enjoy a career, Marion Mann is now a radio singer, endeared to all Breakfast Club fans.



CLOWNING

He spells it Cowling but to all Breakfast Clubbers Sam personifies Clowning.

Here are some Gems of "Fiction & Fact from Sam's Almanac."

Fifty percent of the married people in Denver, Colorado are women.

Take a forest fire for instance . . . now, there's a hot one.

In Arkansas . . . most of the soil consists of dirt.

The distance from the head of a silver fox to his tail . . . is a fur piece.

Aunt Fanny was welcomed back to the program on May 22, 1944. She is impersonated by the same Fran Allison who delighted B. C. fans 'way back in 1937 and 1938.

Mrs. Smith, a Chicago housewife, is not a member of the cast but when Don heard her mile-a-minute chatter one day he invited her to come back often. Can't you just hear her go from this picture?



AUNT FANNY



MRS. SMITH





A QUINTET

The Cadets:

(right to left) Al Stracke, Cal Scheibe, Jack Halloran and Homer Snodgrass wait for Bob Childe at the piano to sound the starting note for this popular quintet.

A QUARTET

The Vagabonds:

Ray "Pappy" Grant greets you with his guitar, while John Jordan, Robert O'Neil and Norvall Toborn (left to right) smile "hello."



A TRIO

The Romeos:

Eddie Ballantine directs Gill Jones, Boyce Smith and Sam Cowling in an inspirational hymn.

A "PEPPER-UPPER"

With all the ingredients for a good Breakfast on hand, the show now depends upon the chef or "pepper-upper." This is where Don really shines. Like a good cook he is everywhere at once when the program begins to boil. He adds a touch here and a pinch there, tasting and sampling as he mixes with the audience.

He gets burned once in a while, too, like the morning he asked the lady if she'd heard the Breakfast Club's last broadcast and got this answer: "I hope so!"

Which brings us to the last and most important part of the Breakfast Club . . . **You:**

How can he miss when an inspirational crowd like this greets him every morning at the studio?



A masculine and muscular duct brings out the smiles on "Chef" McNeill. No wonder, for hasn't he got openers—a pair of Jacks?



THE PART YOU PLAY

*. . . in helping to inspire
Breakfast Club Programs*

Your Wonderful Letters are a constant source of inspiration. They are really the only means Don and the gang have of knowing whether or not their efforts are pleasing. Each letter is carefully read and everything quotable winds up in Don's big black note-book.

As a result, your letters set the tempo of the program. Mrs. Ethel Lee Smith of Somerset, Mass., summed up a typical audience reaction when she wrote:

"I like the variety of the Breakfast Club, not too much of one thing, and the fact that every member of the household can find something to laugh about or listen to. My 12 year old son loves the jokes. My 16 year old son thrills to the music and my 2 year old daughter seems to enjoy the whole program. She has heard 'Good Morning, Breakfast Clubbers' four times each day from the time she was born, and 'Good Morning' were the first words she said when she learned to talk."

A substantial number of regular listeners are "shut-ins" to whom Don gives special attention when selecting material for a Breakfast Club program. Their appreciative responses more than compensate for any extra time he spends in trying to please them.

Representative of the thousands of shut-ins who are loyal Breakfast Clubbers is Margaret Nickerson Martin of Jackson, Mich. It is nearly nine years now that Mrs. Martin has been confined to her home, and during this time she has sent more than 50,000 messages of hope and cheer to all the world; especially to those who like herself are not permitted to partake of a more strenuous life.

She has had many hymns and poems set to music which are heard in churches and over the air waves. Her patriotic poems are epic. Don has featured a number of Mrs. Martin's inspirational messages on Memory Time. The last one he read, "The All American Dad," has been widely hailed and is reprinted here with Mrs. Martin's special permission.



MARGARET NICKERSON MARTIN

THE ALL AMERICAN DAD

He stands with men of the ages
Unique in his way of life;
Kindness his one great virtue
Generous to child and wife.
Not always the graceful lover;
Not always in fashion clad;
But the kind of man to tie to
This All American Dad!

For homes are the hope of a nation
And fathers are fighting today
In fox holes and home front alike
To keep the American way.
So to that prince of a fellow
A rock in a world gone mad;
We gladly pay homage and honor
The All American Dad!

Somewhere in the great Hereafter
Where the laurel leaves are green
There must be something splendid
Some wealth of love unseen
Rewarding all the worry
Lifting the cares he had
Welcoming home to glory
The All American Dad!

. . . INSPIRATION

One of the most beloved features on the Breakfast Club is Inspiration Time. There are a lot of reasons why people listen to the program, but most of them seem to come to the conclusion that the Breakfast Club *gives* them something they need.

Mrs. Arthur E. Meigs of Warren, Ohio expresses this thought succinctly:

"One morning while very depressed, I turned the radio on just as you were starting Inspiration Time. The thought for the day was just what I needed and it did so much to lift me out of that terrible mood that I have listened ever since. I always find help in Inspiration Time."

Copies of Inspiration Time subjects are requested in almost unbelievable quantities. Here are some of the most popular in the last two years:

ON TEACHING THEM TO DRIVE . . .

. . . THE SWEETHEART

To learn to drive the auto, dear,
First push the lever into gear,
Then push your left foot in like this;
That's fine! Now teacher gets a kiss.
Now step upon the starter, so;
That makes the peppy engine go.
Now let your left foot back like this;
Good! Teacher gets another kiss.
Upon the gas you now must step,
That fills the engine full of pep.
That's great! You are a clever miss.
Here, teacher gets another kiss.
Now change to second. Now to high,
You do that just as good as I.
Now stop the car right here, and then
We'll do the lesson once again.

BUT . . . THE WIFE

First, see your car is out of gear,
How?—by this gear-shift lever here.
How can you tell? Why, I feel it. See?
The thing is simple as can be.
Now step on that to make it start,
Great Scott! You'll tear it all apart,
If you don't take your foot off quick
The second that it gives a kick.
Now throw your clutch. For goodness sake!
Your clutch! Your clutch! No, not your brake!
Why? 'Cause I tell you to, that's why,
There, now, you needn't start to cry.
Now pull this lever into low,
Step off the gas and start off slow.
Look out! You almost hit the fence.
Here, let me drive! You've got no sense!

(Anon.)

A HOUSEWIFE'S COMPLAINT

"You never do anything right"
Said a petulant wife to her spouse.
"You can't put a screen in a window
Unless you tear up the whole house."

"I can track you around by the ashes
You flip from your cigaret.
You forget all about the doormat
Whenever the weather is wet."

"You splash up the bath-room mirror
And leave the soap in the bowl;
And the way you muss up the kitchen
Would try any woman's soul."

"Your magazines, books, and papers
Are scattered all over the room;
And you make the whole place as untidy
As though it was hit by a bomb."

I am far from perfect," said hubby,
"I make many mistakes that I rue;
But in picking a partner in marriage
I did a lot better than you!"

Norman I. Schiller
An ardent Breakfast Clubber
from Youngstown, Ohio

G.I.

Sitting on my G.I. bed—
My G.I. hat upon my head,
My G.I. pants, my G.I. shoes,
Everthing free, nothing to lose,
G.I. razor, G.I. comb—
G.I. wish that I were home!

They issued everything we need—
Paper to write on, books to read.
They issue food to make you crow,
G.I. want a long furlough!

Your belt, your shoes, your G.I. tie—
Everything free, nothing to buy.
You eat your food from G.I. plates,
Buy your needs at G.I. rates.
It's G.I. this and G.I. that,
G.I. haircut, G.I. hat.
Everything here is Government Issue,
G.I. wish that I could kiss you!

Sent by Mary E. Stewart
Phila. 23, Pa.

A TEACHER'S PRAYER

I ask Thee for a sure and certain skill,
A patient and consecrated will,
I ask Thee for a while and perfect dream,
A vision of the deep and wide unseen;
Dear Lord, I need those things so much, so much,
A little child is plastic to my touch.
I ask Thee for a love that understands
When it should reach and when withdraw its hands,
A selfishness that flings the locked door wide
For youth to enter while I step aside;
Dear Lord, I need these things so much, so much
A human soul lies plastic to my touch.

(Anon)

... UNDERSTANDING

It takes a dad and a mother to understand the trials and tribulations of being a dad and a mother. So, Don and I constantly examine your contributions for bright little verses that will reflect bright little faces.

Here is a poignant little verse sent in by Mrs. George Benton of Minot, North Dakota, which we like very much.

THE LITTLE BOY WHO DIDN'T PASS

A sad faced little fellow, sits alone in deep disgrace;
There's a lump arising in his throat and tears drop down his face.

He wandered from his playmates he doesn't want to hear
Their shouts of merry laughter since the world has lost its cheer.

He has sipped the cup of sorrow
He has dripped the bitter glass
And his heart is fairly breaking—the boy who didn't pass.

In the apple tree the robin sings a cheery little song
But he doesn't seem to hear it. Showing plainly something's wrong,

Comes his faithful little Spaniel for a romp and bit of play.
But the troubled little fellow bids him sternly "go away!"
And alone he sits in sorrow with his hair a tangled mass
And his eyes are red with weeping—the boy who didn't pass.

Oh, you who boast a laughing son, and speak of him as bright

And you, who love a little girl who comes to you at night,
With shining eyes and dancing feet with honors from her school

Turn to that lonely lad that thinks he is a fool
And take him kindly by the hand, the dullest of his class
He is the one who most needs love—the boy who didn't pass!

Because of copyright and other restrictions it's impossible for Don to answer all the requests for copies of poems read on Memory Time. But I'm sure that you, and the thousands who requested the following poem, will be glad to see it here. It was written and sent in by Mrs. Pearl Elder of Raymond, Mississippi.



DANDELIONS

"Those pesky dandelions," my neighbor cried,
Are spoiling our lovely, grassy lawn.
We must surely dig them up, if left alone,
They grow more rapidly with every dawn."

The years slip back, and in my mind I see
A little boy, with sunny yellow hair.
Such a happy, laughing little boy,
Who smiles at me from out the doorway there.

His chubby little arms reach out to me,
His cap is filled with flowers yellow-gold,
The sun reflects the light upon his face
From blossoms of the dandelions bold.

I wore them proudly, as a Queen her crown,
He brought them all to me to deck my hair.
Ah, God in Heaven, since he loved them so,
I hope You have some dandelions . . . Up There.

Every mother's heart beats a little faster as she experiences or recalls the first day of school. This rhyme by Neva A. Beers is still being requested, although it was presented on Memory Time more than a year ago.

THE FIRST DAY

He started off to school today
My little man.
How eagerly he grasps at Life
His little hand
Outstretched for all that it may hold,
Heedless of the shadows
Seeing but the gold.

I would not hold him back
My little son,
Altho' he seems yet but a babe
Life just begun.
They are so few—his six short years,
And while my heart is filled with pride,
My eyes are filled with tears.

I do not ask that he be spared
For he must grow,
Send shadows with the sun
That he may know
Life's joys are sweeter after care,
But send no more, dear God,
Than his small heart can bear.

And as his hands reach forth
To pluck Ambition's star,
Be gentle, with him, Lord,
As Mothers are.

The child's face brightened. Weakly, she inquired if she went to sleep could she hear the Breakfast Club in the morning. Assured that she could—believe it or not—she sank into a deep sleep; the crisis passed and now she's running about again as good as new.

So sometimes when you're a bit discouraged; when you find your jokes lying just where you laid them; when Nancy is not so well pleased with her register; when Jack Baker just doesn't seem to sparkle and the band thinks itself a bit sour, don't go off the deep end.

Just have your own little "Memory Time" in recalling that God and you, Nancy, Jack and the boys in the band saved the life of a little child. That's all."

Sincerely,
J. D. Dickerson

★ ★ ★

A conscientious effort has been made to give proper credit to the authors of the poems contained in this book. We wish to thank the many authors who gave us their kind permission to reprint their poems. If we have failed to list the authorship of any of these poems we beg forgiveness of the author, and would like to rectify the error in subsequent editions.

To Jeff Dickerson of the editorial staff of the Cincinnati Enquirer we are indebted for this real life "Memory Time."

"An eight-year-old girl in this city was stricken with malignant fever. (The parents wish her to remain anonymous except that her first name is Natalie).

Doctors despaired of her recovery. They advised the crisis would be reached on a certain night. The little pain-racked body tossed fitfully. Sleep was out of the question, and she was in too weakened a condition to permit use of sedatives.

Lullabies were hummed and fairy stories told, but to no avail. Finally her mother said: "Don't you want to go to sleep so you can wake up in the morning and hear the radio?"



... DEVOTION

Because Don and I have such grand mothers, sometimes I think we are a little partial in selecting so many mother-poems for Memory and Inspiration Time. Fortunately, however, this devotion is shared by all Breakfast Clubbers.

Mrs. Jane Proctor of Orlando, Florida sent in this verse with the comment that critics have pronounced it the best Mother poem in existence. We think you will agree.

MY MOTHER

Who went through the dark shades of death
To give me form and flesh and breath?
Who pressed me to her eager heart,
And prayed that we should never part,
And smiled at me despite her smart?
My Mother.

Who eased my pains and dried my tears,
And banished all my early fears?
Who rocked me patiently each day,
And sang my little woes away?
Who saw my follies but as play?
My Mother.

Who was my true, my constant guide,
And spoke of me with joy and pride?
Who toiled for me before my birth,
And showed me heaven here on earth?
In hours of gloom as those of mirth?
My Mother.

Who taught me how to thwart defeat,
And cause temptation's quick retreat?
Who gave me hope and strength to bear
The load of grief and daily care?
Who ever saved me from despair?
My Mother.

Who kept alive her faith in me?
Believing more than she could see?
Who made my happiness her goal,
And played for me a martyr's role?
Who loved me most? God rest her soul—
My Mother.

"I have a prayer," writes Mrs. Julian Bland Ballard of Houston, Texas, "that I'm praying daily now . . . a prayer that I'm sure Mother prayed before I was born. I found it pasted in an old cook book she had as a bride. It does not give the author's name, but I'm sure it was clipped from the Kansas City Star."



A WOMAN'S PRAYER

(For the Child to Come)

God, I am going down to find a little soul, a thing that shall be mine as no other thing in the world has been mine.

Keep me for my child's life. Bring me through my hour strong and well for the sake of my baby.

Prepare me for real motherhood. Preserve my mind from doubts, and worries, and all fearsome misgivings, that I may not stain my thoughts with cowardice, for my child's sake.

Drive all angers and impurities, all low and unworthy feelings from me, that the little mind that is forming may become a brave, clean wrestler in this world of dangers.

And, God, when the child lies in my arms, and draws his life from me, and when his eyes look up to mine; to learn what this new world is like, I pledge Thee the child shall find reverence in me, and no fear; truth and no shame; love strong as life and death, and no hates nor petulance.

God, make my baby love me. I ask no endowments for excellencies for my child, but only that the place of motherhood, once given me, may never be taken from me. As long as the soul lives that I shall bring forth, let there be in it one secret shrine that shall always be mother's.

Give the child a right, a clean mind, and a warm, free soul.

And I promise Thee that I shall study the child, and seek to find what gifts and graces Thou has implanted, and to develop them. I shall respect the child's personality.

I am but Thy little one, O Father. I fold my hands and put them between Thy hands, and say, "Give me a normal baby, and make me a normal mother." Amen.

MOTHER LOVE

Long long ago; so I have been told,
Two angels once met on the streets paved with gold.
"By the stars in your crown," said the one to the other
"I see that on earth you, too, were a mother.
"And by the blue-tinted halo you wear
"You, too, have known sorrow and deepest despair."
"Ah, yes," she replied, "I once had a son,
A sweet little lad, full of laughter and fun.
"But tell of your child."—"Oh, I knew I was blest
From the moment I first held him close to my breast.
And my heart almost burst with the joy of that day."
"Ah, yes," said the other, "I felt the same way."
The former continued, "The first steps he took
So eager and breathless,—the sweet startled look
Which came over his face—he trusted me so,—"
"Ah, yes," sighed the other,—"How well do I know!"
"But soon he had grown to a tall handsome boy
So stalwart and kind—and it gave me such joy
To have him just walk down the street by my side."
"Ah, yes," said the other, "I felt the same pride."
"How often I shielded and spared him from pain
And when he for others was so cruelly slain,
"When they crucified him—and they spat in his face,
How gladly would I have hung there in his place!"
A moment of silence,— "Oh, then you are she,—
The Mother of Christ," and she fell on one knee;
But the Blessed One raised her up, drawing her near,
And kissed from the cheek of the woman, a tear.
"Tell me the name of the son you loved so,
That I may share with you your grief and your woe."
She lifted her eyes, looking straight at the other,
"He was Judas Iscariot. I am his mother."

RICHARD MAXWELL
(by permission)

Dedicated to all mothers—young or old—is this
anonymous plea. It carries a message that even
the most thoughtful will appreciate.

LOVE ME NOW

If you're ever going to love me love me now, while
I can know
All the sweet and tender feelings which from real
affections flow.
Love me now, while I am living; do not wait till I
am gone
And then chisel it in marble—warm love words on
ice-cold stone.
If you've dear, sweet thoughts about me, why not
whisper them to me?
Don't you know 't would make me happy and as glad
as glad could be?
If you wait till I am sleeping, ne'er to waken here
again,
There'll be walls of earth between us and I couldn't
hear you then.

If you knew someone was thirsting for a drop of
water sweet
Would you be so slow to bring it? Would you step
with laggard feet?
There are tender hearts all round us who are thirsting
for our love;
Why withhold from them what nature makes them
crave all else above?
I won't need your kind caresses when the grass grows
o'er my face;
I won't crave your love or kisses in my last low resting
place.
So, then, if you love me any, if it's but a little bit,
Let me know it now while living; I can own and
treasure it.

There are dozens of other Mother-favorites
which might be reprinted, but I believe they are all
appropriately summed up in this Credo. Sent in
by Mrs. William C. Dixon, Jr. of Clayton, New
York, the author is unknown, but it originally
appeared in the News Letter sent to all Home
Bureau Members.

MOTHER'S CREED

I have a deep conviction, when I clean and sew and bake,
That in hands like my own lies the Destiny of America.
While silver wings fly reassuringly and protectingly across
the sky above,
We, with loving hearts and busy hands, guard and watch
those beneath the roof of home.
I do not say by hanging crisp, fresh curtains I can stay the
hands of the enemy,
But I know that I can bring a feeling of bright Serenity to
those around me.
If I can bring order out of chaos in this small home, I will
nurture a sense of well-ordered living.
If I can plant seeds in the Spring, I can show by that small
garden
That God's great miracle of creation exceeds by far a war
lord's lust for destruction.
If I can fill my children's lives with beauty, and show them
bright sunsets,
And night skies filled with stars, I shall prove to them daily
That an Infinitely Kind and Loving Father still rules the
world.
And if, in spite of all precautions that we take,
I have to put the armor on that dear son,
I shall fasten it with bright buckles of Courage and Truth
and Love,
And I shall pray for strength for him and me,
For I still believe that in my folded hands lies the
"Destiny of America."

... APPRECIATION

To succeed, a variety program like the Breakfast Club must tickle the funny bone of the youngster; it must provide sentiment and inspiration for the oldster; it must supply love and home interests. In short, it must run the emotional gamut of life itself.

You, the audience, determine the range and extent of the Breakfast Club. Your contributions and your notes of appreciation set the pace. How widespread these audience-interests are is vividly reflected in your requests for reprints.

Here is a beautiful verse, sent in by H. A. Keller of Jackson Heights, New York, that strikes a sensitive chord with most adult listeners:

GOD BLESS YOU

God bless you! Words are empty things—
We speak and think not of our saying—
But in this phrase forever rings
The higher tenderness of praying.
It means so much—it means that I
Would have no fears or frets distress you,
Nor have your heart timed to a sigh,
God bless you!

This trinity of blessed words
Holds all my wishes, oldest, newest,
The fairest deeds that can be wrought,
The holiest greeting, and the truest,
'Tis more than wishing joy and wealth,
That kindly fortune may caress you,
That you may have success and health,
God bless you!

God bless you! Why, it means so much,
I almost whisper as I say it;
I dream that unseen fingers touch
My hands in answer as I pray it;
May all it means to all mankind
In all its wondrousness possess you,
Through sun and cloud and calm and wind,
God bless you!

Both adults and youngsters seemed to like this change-of-pacer that hopped its way into the studio one sunny morning:

What a funny thing a frog are
When he run he jump—
When he sit he stoop
On his funny little tail
Which he ain't got none—hardly.



Since Sam has taken on the role of heckler, Don finds himself playing straight man more times than he cares to count. Remember this one?:

Don: How did you get bags under your eyes?

Sam: Well, to be sure to wake up in time for the Breakfast Club this morning, I took a toaster to bed with me thinking it was an alarm clock.

Don: A toaster? It kept you warm, didn't it?

Sam: Yeah, not only that. It kept throwing me out of bed every three minutes.

Equally universal in its appeal is this verse sent in by Mrs. L. Farber of Philadelphia.

THE LITTLE BLACK DOG

I wonder if Christ had a little black dog,
All curly and wooly like mine;
With two silky ears and a nose round and wet,
And two eyes, brown and tender, that shine.

I'm sure if He had, that little black dog
Knew right from the start He was God,
That he needed no proof that Christ was divine
But just worshipped the ground that He trod.

I'm afraid that He hadn't, because I have read
How He prayed in the garden alone;
For all of His friends and disciples had fled—
Even Peter, the one called a stone.

And oh, I am sure that little black dog,
With a heart so tender and warm,
Would never have left Him to suffer alone,
But creeping right under His arm,

Would have licked those dear fingers, in agony clasped;
And counting all favors but loss,
When they took Him away would have trotted behind,
And followed Him quite to the Cross.

Elizabeth Gardner Reynolds.

I never know whether to classify this poem under "Love" or "Friendship" but I do know that it has a tremendously strong appeal to Breakfast Clubbers. Published anonymously in the Wall Street Journal years ago it is called:

I LOVE YOU

I love you not only for what you are but for what I am when I'm with you;

I love you not only for what you have made of yourself but what you are making of me;

I love you for putting your hand into my heaped up heart and passing over all the foolish weak things you can't help dimly seeing there, and drawing out in the light all the beautiful belongings that no one else had looked quite far enough to find;

I love you because you are helping me to make of the lumber of my life not a tavern but a temple, out of the work of my everyday life not a reproach but a song;

I love you because you have done more than any creed could have done to make me good and more than any fate could have done to make me happy;

You have done it without a touch, without a word, without a sigh;

You have done it by being yourself.

Perhaps that is what being a friend means, after all.

After reading this gem sent in by Mrs. G. R. Tillema of Westfield, Mass. we all rededicate ourselves, I'm sure, to the beloved task of rearing more little imps.

BELOVED IMP

He empties ash trays on the rugs
And muddies up the floors,
Cuts patterns in the curtains and
Draws pictures on the doors.

He dunks his elbows in his milk
And while we're saying grace
He splashes in his cereal
And daubs it 'round his face.

Strews pots and pans thruout the house,
Digs up my favorite flowers;
In fact, he's just a terror during
All his waking hours

Till bedtime. Then a halo sprouts
Above a smile so sad—
He prays, B'ess Mum and Daddy, God,
And P'EASE make me not so bad. . ."

If my eyes and ears were marble
And my heart a stony chasm,
I might resist that last—but heek—
I'm only protoplasm!

—Betty Heisser.

Real-life dramas work their way into the program with the greatest of ease. I like the one Don tells about Grandpa who was having his after-supper nap in the armchair and emitting sounds that might easily have come from a cross-cut saw. As Don entered the room, he saw little Bobby twisting one of Grandpa's waistcoat buttons.

"What are you doing?" he whispered, "You musn't disturb Grandpa."

"I'm not Daddy," said Bobby, "I was just trying to tune in on something different."

Also true to life is this morning-after ballad submitted by Andrew Gorey, Secretary to the Police Commissioner, of Boston, Massachusetts.

"THE LIFE OF THE PARTY"

Step softly! The life of the party
Is trying to sleep overhead,
So pick up your toys
Like good little boys
And go play at the neighbors' instead.

No, lambs, your papa isn't dying,
And he hasn't the measles or mumps.
He's just got a pain
On the top of his brain
And his spirits are down in the dumps.

Last night he worked overtime trying
To prove to his guests and to me
That middle-aged men
Could be youngsters again,
But the strain laid him low, as you see.

Last night he turned handsprings and cartwheels
And swung from the hall chandelier,
Or with murderous whoops
Attack enemy troops,
While applause urged him on from the rear.

Last night he was General MacArthur
Joe Louis, Leander, and Clive—
Last night, full of vim,
He went out on a limb,
And today he is barely alive.

So run along, kiddies, and don't slam
The door as you go out to play
To tell you the truth
He's allergic to youth
Of any description today!

. . . PATRIOTISM

In their travels to various parts of the country doing patriotic shows, on visits to veteran's hospitals, camps, etc. the Breakfast Club gang has been able to observe America-at-War. The picture hasn't always been pretty. The toil and sacrifice of the big and the little thrilled them; the tragedy of broken homes sobered them; but the occasional show of intolerance saddened them most.

For that reason, Don was quick to air the following letter shortly after his return from a trip during which they had witnessed such an un-American act. The letter was written by a woman who asked that her name not be mentioned.

"Dear Don McNeill:

I am not a Catholic nor a Protestant, but I am an American. I believe I am as patriotic and loyal to my country as any good American. But I certainly feel let down when time after time you hear people who continually say we do nothing for our country and we are only parasites and should be annihilated. "That Hitler is doing one smart thing by getting rid of the Jews."

Sitting on a bus I heard a man make that remark. Do you wonder why I am writing to you, telling you my story? Asking you to tell our America just what one little Jewish family so far has done.

My oldest son, who was 18 years old, gave his life for his country while on extra hazardous duty on his ship somewhere on the Atlantic Ocean. He died two weeks before Pearl Harbor.

My second son will be going soon as an Army Air Cadet. My husband gave up a fine job to work for defense.

My two youngest boys help gather scrap and made a beautiful Victory Garden. And my little girl, who is 3½ years old, sings "God Bless America."

I am a Nurses Aide and give between 5 and 10 hours a week in the hospital.

Should we be annihilated? Born and raised as Americans . . . doing our little bit, but I think the little bit that means so much with other little bits that are being done. And I know if there is more we can do we will be the first to do it. Yet do you wonder the way I feel that people should say such things? And I know there are other Jewish families that have done as much and more, and get the same slap in the face.

But with it all we still go on singing, "God Bless America."

Sincerely yours,"

Letters of condolence perhaps constitute the most difficult writing we have to do. Not long ago an army major lost a son who was a second lieutenant and a pilot of a Liberator bomber. The son was killed in action. Another army major wrote the following letter, which Cedric Adams reprinted in the Minneapolis Star-Journal with the comment: "This is a classic."

"Dear Frank:

I just heard that your son has joined a new outfit. Neither you nor he wanted that transfer. But both of you were ready when it came through. I hear it's a pretty fine unit—maybe the best there is. I know some of the boys who joined up earlier. Swell guys, all of them. They say the Commanding Officer knows each one by his first name. Some day we shall all have a chance to meet Him and see His gang. Meanwhile, it's pretty tough going—awful tough. But it can be handled—especially because that's the way he would want it. I guess I should extend to you some formal statement of sympathy, but I don't think you need or want that from me, You and I—yes, and your son, too, know what that means. So tough it out, soldier, and keep firing."

Wounded Sailors at Great Lakes look at Marion and say "Yeah, Mann."



The rank-and-file of our women may feel left out of things at times. But, whenever I sense that "pity-poor-me" attitude working up to the surface on any of my friends I mail them a copy of this prayer which was clipped from a periodical:

A CIVILIAN'S PRAYER

HELP ME, Almighty God, to be the only kind of hero I can ever be.

HELP ME see how important it is that I go gladly and energetically about the humdrum business of saving my tires and my fuel, of spending less and saving more, of asking less and giving more.

HELP ME see that while the war may be won no matter what I do, the light we fight to keep alive may go out because of what I prove myself to be.

HELP ME to realize that Americans are fighting today, not to create freedom and opportunity for the ruthless and greedy, but to make it possible for the kind men, men of integrity, responsible men to work in peace, and to work for the common good.

HELP ME to realize that these fighting men—indeed, the good men and women of the whole world—are waiting now for one small but all important sign from me.

THEY KNOW I can't join them in the blood and dirt. But they want to see if I will seek responsibility. They wait now to see if I need merely to be led to do my part or if I must be driven. For that will tell them if their spirit is also my spirit, and their purpose mine.

HELP ME not to fail them. Amen.

The following poem has quite a history. It was written by Frances Anger-Mayer of Kansas City, Mo. and was published in several journals under the title of *CONVERSION*. Apparently a number of copies found their way to our fighting boys overseas, for several instances of finding copies of it on bodies of unknown Yanks killed in action have been brought to our attention.

It was presented on the Breakfast Club as the "Poem of the Unknown Soldier" read by James J. Walker on his regular Sunday afternoon broadcast from New York City. We are happy to credit it here to its true authoress—Frances Anger-Mayer.

CONVERSION

Look God, I have never spoken to You,
But now I want to say How do You do,
You see, God, they told me You didn't exist,
And like a fool, I believed all this.

Last night from a shell hole, I saw Your sky
I figured right then they had told me a lie,
Had I taken time to see things You made,
I'd have known they weren't calling a spade a spade.

I wonder, God, if You'd shake my hand.
Somehow, I feel that You will understand,
Funny I had to come to this hellish place,
Before I had time to see Your Face.

Well, I guess there isn't much more to say,
But I'm sure glad, God, I met You today.
I guess the "Zero hour" will soon be here,
But I'm not afraid since I know You're near.

The Signal! Well, God, I'll have to go,
I like You lots, this I want You to know,
Look now, this will be a horrible fight,
Who knows, I may come to Your house tonight.

Though I wasn't friendly to You before,
I wonder, God, if You'd wait at Your door,
Look, I'm crying! Me! Shedding tears!
I wish I had known You these many years.

Well, I have to go now, God, good-bye!
Strange, since I met You, I'm not afraid to die.

"Don't Forget to Pray" is the advice given to those in the service of their country.

It was sent in by Blanche R. Kinstle of Maumee, Ohio.

Son, there ain't so much that we can say
Though deep within our hearts,
There's countless thoughts we can't express
When it comes time to part.

Of course, we'll tell you to be brave
After you've gone away,
But first of all comes this advice,
Son, don't forget to pray.

We won't be with you over there—
Your hand can't touch ours when
You reach for just a friendly touch,
And comes remembrance then.

But up above, there's Someone Who
Hears every word you say,
And when things are the toughest, Son,
Just don't forget to pray.

There ain't much we can say to help
When times like these arise,
Except to say 'tis best to look
For aid up in the skies.

For He Who watches over you
When you are far away
Will be the One Who cares for you;
Son, don't forget to pray.

Some day you will be back with us—
Some day you'll understand
That pathways leading to the best
Are guided by His hand.

And though there ain't much folks like us—
Just plain old folks—can say,
'Tis with believing hearts we ask
Son—Don't forget to pray.

... PARTICIPATION

Now, the radio world knows that you Breakfast Clubbers not only listen to your favorite program on your Blue Network Station, but that you go out and campaign for it. We were all very proud of the way you participated in the Charter Membership Drive and the Contest for New Listeners in the spring of 1944.

Don looked forward to your usual enthusiastic response, but, frankly, neither he nor the post office were quite prepared for the deluge of mail which poured in when the first announcements were made. Experts still blink when we tell them

Don helps Pat Conlon, Quiz Kid, when he made a guest appearance on the Breakfast Club fill out his application for a charter membership card.



Left to right: Mrs. Dorothea Harris, Mrs. Beth McNeely, Mrs. Frank Whise.

that 875,000 of you applied for charter membership cards *in the first week.*

That's a record you can be proud of, for, as far as I know, in the history of radio no other audience has ever responded in such great numbers in such a short time. You may remember that the offer had to be withdrawn after the first week because the post office and the Blue Network staff couldn't keep up with the flood of requests.

This must have been a disappointment to many of you who had planned to write for your membership card during the second week. Don is sorry about this, but perhaps, after the world returns to normalcy they will be able to work out some plan so that all of you may have membership cards.

A total of 113 awards, valued at \$4,700 in War Bonds and Stamps were given away to charter members and new listeners. Mrs. Dorothea Harris of St. Petersburg, Fla., won the contest and \$1,000 in bonds, while Mrs. Frank Whise, also of St. Petersburg was awarded an identical prize of \$1,000 for being the charter member who helped the winner with her entry. In the picture above, that's Mrs. Beth McNeely, director of women's programs at WSUN in St. Petersburg, announcing the good news to the winners.

Surprise . . . !

The rest of the book is ours now, so
take down your hair girls and let the
wives-cracks fall where they may.

Kay McNeill

Dear Don:

I hope you and the gang will
be pleased and surprised with
this section of my book.

Hundreds of your loyal Break-
fast Clubbers helped me prepare
it and I am proud to present
their intimate questions and
personal reasons for listening
to the B.C.

If it gets too personal at times,
dear, please remember that
you have only one life to
give to your art -- the other
one belongs to the boys and
me.

Devotedly
Kay

MEET MY ASSISTANT EDITORS . . .

Dorothy W. Barr
Upper Darby, Pa.

Mrs. Albert Barsch
Bayonne, N. J.

Mrs. Geo. H. Bates
Fall River, Mass.

Mrs. W. W. Bilger
Miami, Florida

Mrs. W. A. Bjorklund
Hoopeston, Illinois

Mrs. W. E. Blaney
Mariemont
Cincinnati, Ohio

Mrs. Wm. F. Brunelli
Franklin, Mass.

Mrs. Martin F. Bump
Troy, New York

Mrs. Anna Carmody
Trenton, N. J.

Mrs. Luella M. Cary
Aurora, Illinois

Mrs. Clifford Christine
Corpus Christi, Texas

Mrs. Frances Dyer Clary
Jacksonville, Florida

Mrs. Virginia M. Darling
Detroit 27, Michigan

Mrs. J. P. Dumpy
Alton, Illinois

Mrs. C. Howard Evans
Lake Worth, Florida

Lois R. Flinchbaugh
R. D. 1
Red Lion, Pa.

Mrs. Donald E. Flora
Elgin, Illinois

Mrs. Harry C. Frank
New York, New York

Mrs. Adele Girard
Galeua, Illinois

Mrs. R. S. Grant
Indianapolis, Ind.

Mrs. Fred Gregory
Lincoln Park 25, Mich.

Mrs. Wendell A. Grier
Roanoke, Indiana

Mrs. M. E. Hamm
R. R. No. 3
Lehigh, Pa.

Mrs. Fred Haslett
North East, Pa.

Mrs. L. Elnora Hengst
Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Mrs. Grace Howard
Charlestown, Ind.

Mrs. Jessie Hylton
West Wyoming, Pa.

Mrs. Mary A. Jeppson
Medford, Massachusetts

Mrs. Thomas Kent
Flint 5, Michigan

Mrs. E. C. Keys
Springfield, Mass.

Mrs. Lela Holmes Lindley
West Lafayette, Indiana

Mrs. Arthur Meigs
Warren, Ohio

Mrs. W. Miller
Cleveland, Ohio

Mrs. Rita P. Monnier
Attleboro, Mass.

Mrs. Floyd Monroe
Pontiac, Michigan

Mrs. T. Gerald Moon
Dayton, Ohio

Mrs. Marie R. Morin
Taunton, Massachusetts

Mrs. Viola Netherland
Park Ridge, Illinois

Mrs. W. R. Nieman
Aurora, Illinois

Mrs. Miriam H. Pike
Philadelphia, Pa.

Mrs. Clarence Roberts, Jr.
Sarasota, Florida

Mrs. L. C. Robertson
Wichita Falls, Texas

Mrs. Ernest Rouch
R. D. 3
Bangor, Pa.

Mrs. F. M. Rowe
Daytona Beach, Fla.

Mrs. John Sally, Jr.
Kent, Ohio

Mrs. Harold Sauter
Route No. 2
Plainfield, Ill.

Mrs. Leonard Schleicher
Irvington 11, N. J.

Mrs. Chas. Schuh
Buffalo, New York

Mrs. Ethel Lee Smith
Somerset, Mass.

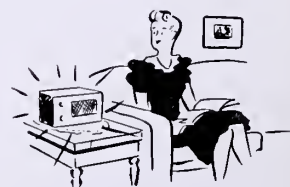
Mrs. Joseph Stoeckel
R. D. 3
Binghamton, N. Y.

Mrs. E. Van Pelt, Jr.
Elizabeth 1, N. J.

Mrs. Laurel Vincent
R. D. 1
Amboy, Indiana

Mrs. B. H. Warner
Adrian, Michigan

Mrs. T. H. Watson
Route 1
Ft. Myers, Florida



JUST AMONG US GIRLS . . .

"If you had the opportunity of chatting with Don or me in your living room, what is the one big unanswered question you would like answered in connection with his activities?"

This is one of the questions I asked my assistant editors in an effort to determine some of the things you might like to know about "Don's Other Life." Their questions were so varied and so sincere that I have decided to answer them all to the best of my ability. Here they are:

(NOTE TO PRINTER: "Set these pages in real small type because lots of this is secret stuff" Kay.)

Q. Does Don really joke with you and the children as he says he does?

A. Yes . . . hut, we provide him with the ammunition.

Q. Isn't Don ever depressed or blue?

A. Like everyone else, he has his moments. I think the most admirable quality about Don is that when he does feel depressed he doesn't try to share the mood with us. He retires to his den, or workshop, or sleeps it off. Most people picture him as bubbling over with good health and spirits. There are many times when I think he should miss a show, for instance when he injured his back, and again when he insisted on broadcasting, with a strep throat, from the hospital bed. Both efforts were great, hut he did the shows just the same. His greatest disappointment, I believe, was in being classified 4-F because of this haek injury.



Q. Does Don hold a regular job or is his whole time taken up with this very fine radio program?

A. Don manages to keep pretty busy around the studio, even when the show is off the air. See illustration on this page.

Q. How did Don propose to you?

A. It took place in the front seat of a Dodge while driving through Cherokee Park in Louisville, Ky. I will never forget the flowery language he used. He looked at me and said: "Will you marry me?" and I said: "Yes." We were married at a little Spanish ehurch on Twin Peaks in San Francisco. Van Fleming, who was doing a show with Don on the West Coast at the time, was our best man.

Q. Who takes care of the children during the night?

A. In ease of minor eruptions, I handle it. If two or more need attention in the middle of the night I call on Don. He had experience with children before we were married, taking care of his sister who is ten years younger than Don. His sister is now Mrs. John Donahue. John, who is a psychiatrist and originally from Minnesota, is a lieutenant in the army.

Q. Will it be possible for him to continue as M. C. for many years to come?

A. Don hopes he may be able to continue until one of the boys can take over the job. Donny always has said: "I'd like Dad's job. I don't care what the kids say about me!"



Q. Have you both found the secret of happiness?

Kay: Mutual tolerance, respect, and love of children are working well for us. We think the relationship between parents and children is an important and beautiful thing. We look forward to the time when our youngsters will be 15 or 16 . . . when we can sit down with them and have a frank talk about life . . . believe me, we expect to learn plenty.

Don: The one and only argument we ever had was last summer. It was just a little personal matter about the home that went on for about a week. We are quite proud of our lawn, and the grass had done right well for the first year, too. Well, she bought a sand box for Robert Patrick to play in and put it in the middle of the backyard where the grass grew the thickest. I protested and said it could be in some other spot where it wouldn't spoil the grass. She said there was no other spot where Robert would get the morning sun all morning, I said . . . well, why spoil the grass? She said . . . do you think more of the grass or of Bobby? And it went on like that for a week. She's a stubborn woman in some ways, you know. But all you gotta do is use a little logic and keep talking to her. And you know the sand box doesn't look so bad right in the middle of the back yard at that.

Q. What would Don do if the stork brought him a girl to brag about?

A. For the last two years we have all been praying for twin girls. The boys have promised to take good care of them. Anybody would be very happy to have a baby girl and we hope God will bless us with one who will turn out to be twins.

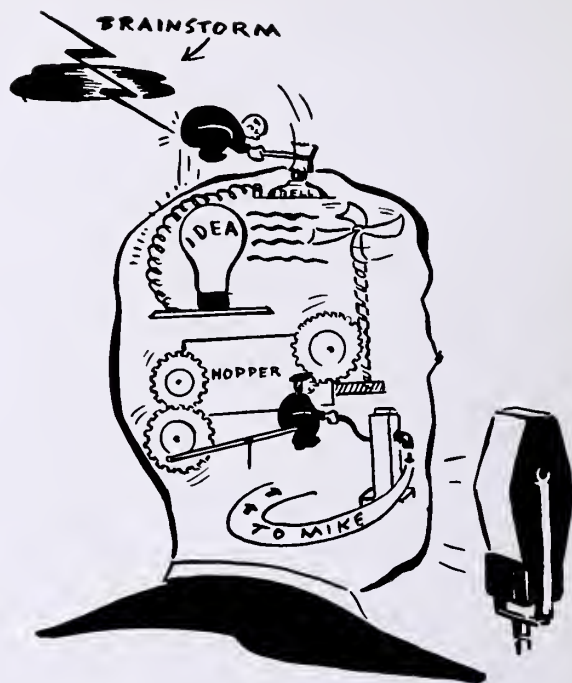
Q. How does Don find time to get in touch with the celebrities he brings to the studio?

A. It's really no problem. Most of them are acquainted with the program and contact Don when they arrive in Chicago from Hollywood or New York. They are always very happy to appear on the show.

Q. Does Don really catch fish?

A. Yes, he does very well at it. But he should, for he has a mighty fine teacher in his father. That's Don and his dad entertaining Nancy with stories of the ones that got away . . . or are they measuring beards?

I'm the one who urges Don to get away once in a while on a fishing trip, for I feel he needs a change from the wear and tear of a 6-day a week program. Usually he is able to combine a fishing trip with a bond-selling tour, a visit to a disabled veteran's hospital or to a camp. His health is very important to all of us and if he didn't rest and relax occasionally, he wouldn't be able to continue his work.



Q. Where does Don get his material?

A. From here, there and everywhere. An artist friend of ours sketched the accompanying illustration which is far more descriptive than I could hope to be.

Q. Does Don like to wash dishes?

A. He doesn't like to wash dishes and he certainly doesn't like to wipe them but he always pitches in when I ask him for help. He's very willing—it says here.

Q. What are your hobbies?

Kay: Golfing, gardening, sewing, weaving and canning, but my favorite hobby is my hubby.

Don: Fishing, hunting, painting, golfing, drawing cartoons, writing, and Kay.

Q. To what do you attribute Don's grand personality and even disposition?

A. To his mother and father. He had a fine start in life.

Q. If he has no script, how does he judge the time so accurately?

A. There's a big clock on the studio wall, and he wears a stop watch on his wrist to guide him as he wanders around with the mike.

Q. Why in heaven's name isn't Don on a long evening program?

A. He has been asked to do several evening programs, but that could mean giving up the Breakfast Club, which is unthinkable. Someday he might do a night show, if it didn't interfere with the good old B. C.

DID I MARRY A BIGAMIST? . . . *or how does Don spend the other half of his life?*

Every man has two loves, if he amounts to anything. One is his work and the other is his family.

Just because Don's work brings him into contact with so many beautiful girls, many of our friends and Breakfast Club listeners wonder how we manage to be so happy. My answer to that question is always the same. I believe that what Don does during the day is his own business—and judging from the art on this page, business is usually good.

Seriously, though, our marriage is based on mutual tolerance, respect and love of children. You know that he loves his work by the enthusiasm he puts into it every day and we know that he loves his family by the many considerate and lovable things he does for us.



Phyllis Brooks, Robert Lowry and Jean Heather of Hollywood fame were enrolled by Don and Merritt Schoenfeld of the Blue as charter members when they stopped in Chicago last March.

Bill Krenz, Marion Mann, Sam, Don, and Jack with a group of models at a fashion show they put on for the grocer's convention.





Life with Bother

*Or the kind of Man
I live with*



Alert

No man is a hero in the eyes of his valet or his wife, they say. Don is an exception to this rule. Just to prove what a perfect example of husbandry he really is I've commissioned Mike, the roving candid cameraman, to photograph him in his natural habitat.

Okey, Mike, go to work! Here are your captions: He is an early and easy riser; he is romantic. He is prompt in leaving work; he is an entertaining conversationalist; he is liberal; and, best of all, he is a homebody.



Romantic



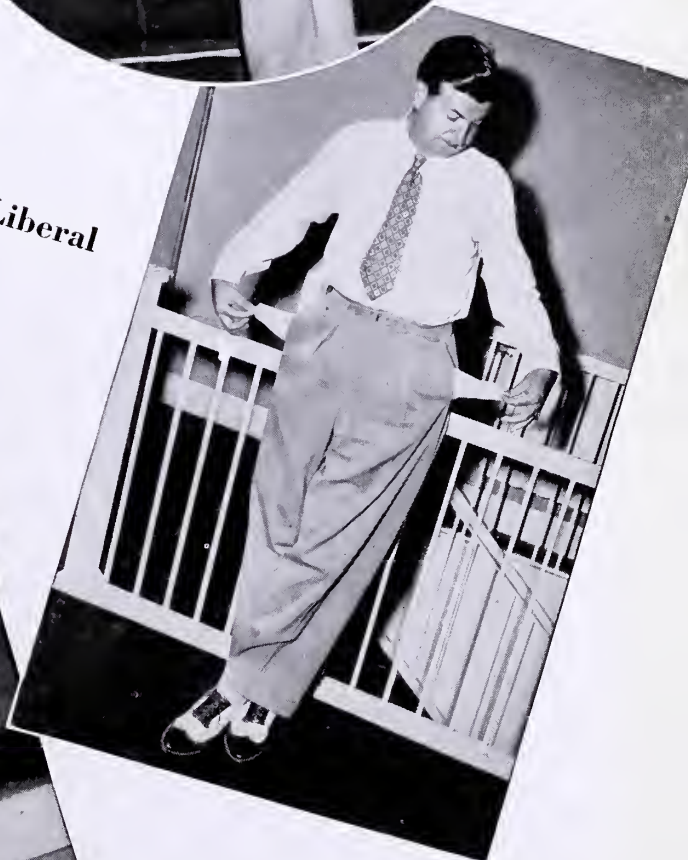
Prompt



Entertaining



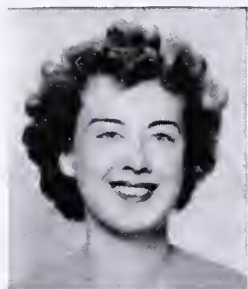
Homebody



Liberal

Editor's Note: Oh, dear! Something went wrong with Mike's Utopia filter and we'll have to accept Don just as he is.

Air Wives . . . *The Girls Behind the Men Behind the Breakfast Club*



Mrs. Jack Owens (Helen): Lots of Breakfast Club wives write Jack and ask him how I feel about his singing to all those women in the studio every morning. Well, with the manpower shortage, I think we should all be willing to share our husbands—that is, with reservations, of course. He can sing to all the ladies he wants to, but he better catch the 5:20 home to me and the kids every afternoon!



Mrs. Jack Baker (Polly): At the present writing Jack is quite a homebody here in Springfield, Mo. Naturally, he is crazy about our new baby, and I must admit, I am too. Don used to kid Jack so much about his big appetite. He still has it, but now he has to think of the baby too—so, as soon as he is through eating his fourth helping of chicken he always asks, “Has the baby been fed yet?” Isn’t that sweet?



Mrs. Sam Cowling (Dell): Some Breakfast Clubbers might be inclined to think, from listening to my husband on the air, that he is silly. And others might think he is as silly at home as he is on the Breakfast Club. I would like to dispell this theory. Sam is not as silly at home as he is on the air. He is much sillier.



Mrs. Harry Kogen (Naomi): I am very proud of the musical prowess of my husband, but very few people realize that Harry was a fine violinist before he became a leader. However, he has never admitted that he plays second fiddle at home. Well, who am I to argue with a musician?

The Second Generation

Gather around now, Breakfast Clubbers, and meet the second generation. You've met the McNeill trio—Tommy, Donny and Bobby—several times, but this is the first opportunity we've had to introduce the Baker, Cowling and Owens children.

John Willard Baker just made the deadline for this book by arriving on June 29, which is his dad's birthday, too. Don't you think he is a dead ringer for his dad—even to the double chin and receding forehead?

Sam and Billy Cowling, aged 7 and 5, respectively, struck this reflective pose when they were asked to comment on their dad's work. After some deliberation they thoughtfully chorused: "Nuts!"

It was beginning to look like the Breakfast Club of 1960 would be dominated by mere males until Jack Owens returned to Chicago and the program with his lovely family. That was a happy day for all of us, and it prompted Mrs. Laurel Vincent of Amboy, Ind. to write recently:

"I liked the two words your Tommy used to describe Mary Ann Owens: 'Woooo, Woooo!'"

John Willard Baker



Sam, Jr. and Billy
Cowling



The Owens: Mary
Ann, 9; Noel, 3; and
Johnny, 6.

THE AGES OF DON *Of Thee I Sing*

1907-1910 Galena, Illinois Period. Galena is known as the "Birthplace of Glory," General Grant also having been born there. Nothing in particular is known about Don's first three years there except that one time he swallowed an egg and almost choked to death. This was his first gag.



. . . Galena

Mother McNeill introduces Don to his first birdie. And he responds with the infectious smile which you Breakfast Clubbers know so well. Now you know, too, where Don got his luxuriant dark hair. Saturday, December 23, 1907 was the big day in the McNeill household.

1910-1925 Sheboygan, Wisconsin Period. Don grew through childhood, grade school and high school, winning the name "Daddy Long Legs," later changed to "Stinky." School records from this period show he was just a normal growing boy. Hobbies ranged from hunting and fishing to reading Joe Miller.



. . . Sheboygan

Father McNeill, who is still looked upon as one of Wisconsin's leading sportsmen, exerted a great influence during this period. He taught Don to think straight and grow tall in the outdoors. They're still wonderful pals. Sister Agnes arrived in 1917.

1925-1930 Milwaukee, Wisconsin Period. Honors came often and fast to Don as he studied journalism at Marquette University. He was Valedictorian of the class of 1929; editor of the year-book; selected by two honor societies and one social fraternity; finished with a four year scholastic average of $88\frac{1}{3}\%$.



. . . Milwaukee

This is when we met and Don started radio work on the side to pay for our dates. I hope he still thinks it was all worthwhile. After graduation he began to tell the world in the three ways illustrated in this self-cartoon: on the radio, as a staff writer and as a cartoonist for the radio section.

1930-1931 Louisville, Kentucky Period. Don left for Kentucky and a better radio job. He also became radio editor and cartoonist on the newspaper that owned the station. Then he met Van Fleming, a popular singer, and Don's sense of humor began seeping into the microphone routine. Soon a new team was born.

1931-1932 West Coast Period. McNeill and Fleming became known as "Don and Van, the Two Professors." With plenty of enthusiasm and ambition, they went out and sold their idea of "Coo-Coo College" to a sponsor. For a year and a half they aired the show on a national hookup from the Pacific Coast.

1933 Starvation Period. This was strictly from hunger. With radio contracts difficult to renew in the West, we all bundled into our car and drove to New York City. Broadway greeted Van and Don with a tremendous hush so they dissolved the act.

Breakfast Club Period. On June 23, 1933, Don McNeill walked into a Chicago studio and a radio show known as the "Pepper Pot." From that day on it became the "Breakfast Club" and Don became the master of ceremonies.



. . . Louisville



. . . West Coast



. . . New York

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, we soon learned. On a visit to Louisville, Don popped the question and after a long pause of one second, I said yes. We announced our engagement early in 1931 and Don promptly grew a moustache . . . "to help me keep a stiff upper lip during the depression," he said.

We were married in San Francisco . . . on September 12, 1931 at the Little Spanish church on Twin Peaks. Don always says I chased him all the way to the West Coast, but the truth is that he couldn't get time off to come East. He begged me to come out and marry him there. So I did, and we were, and still are.

After an interlude in Milwaukee where Don's Saturday Night Jamboree shows packed the Auditorium, he decided to try Chicago and "big-time."

Here's where Don started Breakfast Clubbing, with me taking care of production on the home front. Little did we know that it would be going on stronger than ever, years later. Goodness knows how much longer it will last, but as Don always says, "It's better than working."

Air Bosses . . . *Men Behind the Men and Women of the Blue Network*

One of the first jobs I had to do in preparing this book for publication was to secure permission from the executives of the Blue Network for the privilege of using photographs of their artists and copyrighted material. All of them were so grand and cooperative that I promised to give them a place of honor in my book. So, here they are.

In the photograph on the right, Mark Woods (left), president of the Blue Network, and Edgar Kobak, the chain's executive vice president, confer with Edward J. Noble (center), principal owner of the Blue Network. These gentlemen make their headquarters in New York City.

ED BOROFF

E. K. HARTENBOWER



M. R. SCHOENFELD

GENE ROUSE



The Chicago executives, who are responsible for the smooth functioning of the Central Division of the Network, include these handsome gentlemen:

Ed Boroff, vice president in charge of the Central Division.

E. K. Hartenbower, former sales manager of the division, who is now managing a radio station in Kansas City.

M. R. Schoenfeld, assistant vice president of the Central Division.

Gene Rouse, program manager, and former well-known Chicago announcer.



MORE BOSSES... and more success came my way when I asked Don to clear the way with the sponsors of the Breakfast Club air time for the publication of Don's Other Life. Notice how diplomatic Don appears in these proceedings, but how was he to know that all these kind gentlemen had previously given me the necessary releases on the grounds "that they were curious, too, about that guy's other life."

Don's guests in the top photograph, left to right, are Orville Droege, Bill Holton, Verne Beatty, Ernie Swearingen and Carl Thommen—all officials of Swift & Co.

Below he is still in an entertaining mood. The dinner check however, was charged to The Kellogg Co. and signed by James Bennett, Ralph Olmstead, Earle Freeman, W. H. Vanderploeg, Don, L. P. Stafford and J. T. Lewis. (left to right).



AS ONE WIFE TO ANOTHER . . .

Unusual listening habits of Breakfast Clubbers

You've seen how and when our family listens to the program. Now let's observe some of the unusual listening habits of other regulars.

Dorothy W. Barr of Upper Darby, Pa. outlines a shuttle schedule which may assist other readers in arranging an orderly work and listen program. "My listening schedule," she writes, "goes something like this: On Monday I try to have my laundry work done in time to listen. Tuesday I sleep a little longer (I am a defense worker for the duration) and do my ironing while listening.

Wednesday and Thursday are cleaning days, so I try not to run the vacuum until it is over. Friday I do my marketing for the week and I am afraid I miss some things, although there is a radio in the car. Saturday I go over the house again, being sure to arrange my work so I don't miss a thing."

In contrast, this suggestion comes from Mrs. C. Howard Evans of Lake Worth, Florida: "I concentrate my work in the kitchen or living room where the radios are. One will miss something of interest if you try to work all over the house."

Quickly, here are other interesting listening habits:

I have both radios going, so I can move to one room from another without missing a thing. During school months the children time themselves by the program—Mrs. Donald E. Flora, Elgin, Illinois.



I insist on servicing cars equipped with radios while I help at the gas station—Mrs. Fred Gregory, Lincoln Park, Michigan.

Just sitting and listening, but with a cup of coffee on my knee that I usually spill—Mrs. Luella M. Cary, Aurora, Illinois.

My daughter had her office tune in when the boss was on his vacation—Mrs. Albert Barseh, Bayonne, N. J.

Mrs. Martin F. Bump of Troy, New York, a nurse's aid, writes: "I listen in the hospital while giving baths and making beds."

Keeps the children from starting their Indian yells outdoors 'til a decent hour—Mrs. E. Van Pelt Jr., Elizabeth, N. J.

Several women, including Mrs. Grace Howard of Charlestown, Ind., Mrs. Fred Haslett of North East, Pa., and Mrs. T. Gerald Moon of Dayton, Ohio, chorus: "Knitting for the Red Cross and listening to the Breakfast Club just seem to go together."



BREAKFAST FEUD . . . *Unusual incidents associated with listening to the Breakfast Club as reported by:*

Mrs. Floyd Monroe, Pontiae, Mich.—One day when you were playing an opera, I was singing at the top of my lungs when I became aware of pounding on the back door. Answering it, I found the bread man, milk man and insurance man offering to help me. They thought I was dying.

Mrs. W. E. Blancy, Cincinnati, Ohio—When our 6 year old son was isolated in his room with the measles this winter, nothing would satisfy him until we put a radio in his room so he could hear the Breakfast Club. He's been an ardent fan ever since he was old enough to appreciate the radio. He talks about the cast and your boys as though he knew them personally.

Mrs. Frances Dyer Clary, Jacksonville, Fla.—While doing dishes one morning, I discovered that I was missing the Breakfast Club. While running across a newly waxed floor with a kettle of hot water in my hands I slipped and splashed, breaking a pile of dishes on top of it all. I reached the radio just in time to hear Don's cheery voice saying: "This is your toastmaster, Don McNeill, saying 'So long, and be good to yourself.'"

Mrs. George H. Bates, Fall River, Mass. — During March Time one morning I was emptying the baby's bathinette. While I had the baby in my arms and was marching around the nursery, I didn't notice the pan was overflowing. Needless to say, I had a large pool of water to clean up.

Mrs. Virginia M. Darling, Detroit, Mich.—There is one Breakfast Club day that will be fresh in my memory forever. My sister and her newly acquired beau and my husband and I got up at daylight to see the gang in action. We were first in line . . . only at the Furniture Mart. Off to a bad start! While running for a street car, my sister ran right out of one of her shoes, so we missed the car and my sis is still miss(ed).

Arriving finally at the Merchandise Mart we found we were first after all—three hundred and first. To top it all off, Don interviewed me and I had a little joke to tell . . . but I had to tell it to him first. Raising his voice, he said: "Oh no, we can't tell that on the air." To this day my friends still look at me queerly and wonder what a sweet little thing like me could possibly have said that couldn't go over the air.





Don-Kay Serenade...

or, why we listen to B.C.



THE HOUSEWIFE

Hi! Don McNeill: I am Mrs. Grier,
I've listened to Breakfast Club, many a year.
Why do I listen? Can't say just why—
Must be just because I like the guy.

I like your gags—I like your style—
I like the music—and I get a smile
from Fiction and Facts—and have to grin
at the way you sneak those "commercials" in.

I think Jack's a Baker who earns his dough—
and Marion Mann adds to your show—
I like the singing of your Miss Nancy,
and think her songs are mighty fancy.

When do I listen to Breakfast Club?
Sometimes when Baby is in her tub—
Sometimes when I'm doing the dishes—
or even feeding the Tropical fishes.

I've laughed at many a McNeill joke
as I sorted laundry, or put it to soak.
I have no "pet peeve" that's worth a mention,
But HURRY that new television invention.

I'd like to have seen that "mess of messes"
When you egg-shampooed that lady's tresses.
I have just one question—I think it's fair—
Kay! is Don as nice as he sounds on the air?

Now you know, Kay and Don McNeill,
How 'The Breakfast Club makes this housewife feel.

"Be Good To Yourself"

Mrs. Wendell Grier
Roanoke, Indiana

Mrs. M. E. Hamm, Lehighton, Pa.—Because I like
the whole show. You see I am a shut-in, and its good, clean
entertainment helps me forget about myself.

Mrs. Fred Haslett, North East, Pa.—75% pleasure,
10% habit, 10% table talk, 5% keeping up with the
Joneses. All together 100% of jolly, clean fun.

Mrs. Harry C. Frank, New York City—It starts my
day with a boost—with a serious thought and with a smile.

Mrs. Arnold W. Werner, North Canton, Ohio—There
is no distinction discernable between radio celebrity and
listener, because Don has the ability of making the big and
little fellow feel just the same in equality. Such a contribu-
tion to the welfare and entertainment of his listeners keeps
him at the top in their appreciation.

THE MILITARY

Evidences that the Breakfast Club program
has a morale-building value to the armed forces as
well as to the mothers of boys in the service are
contained in every mail delivery. For example:

A Mother from South Carolina, who prefers to remain
anonymous, writes: "I want to tell you what a wonderful
thing you are doing to lift our spirits. My son has been
overseas a year now, and like millions of mothers I find the
days and nights very hard to get through. When I get up
in the morning feeling low... there's the Breakfast Club
with its wonderful music. Then there'll be a joke or some-
thing funny, and I find myself laughing and feeling lots
better."

"Keep us laughing," says Seaman Second Class
Lawrence L. Ross of Chicago from the Naval Hospital on
Treasure Island, San Francisco, Calif. "The Breakfast
Club really entertains all of us in our ward," he says, "and
when your gang gives to the War Bond effort it really
thrills me."

Corp. M. K. Dickler: "Throughout our barracks every
morning, it's your Breakfast Club. I've noticed the en-
thusiastic reaction of the enlisted men not only in our
outfit, but all over Bergstrom Field."

"Don is a regular morale keeper upper," a spokes-
man for the boys of the Medical Detachment of the 29th
Engineers located in Portland, Ore. reports. "We 'sweat
out' your program every morning. Yea, man! Eat your
meal with Don McNeill and suffer no indigestion."

This is a letter Don received recently from a
serviceman telling of the results of having him
meet a young lady from the Breakfast Club audi-
ence and sending them out to dinner and the eve-
ning. Don does this quite often on the show.

"Dear Sir: We're writing you in regard to the meet-
ing of the Breakfast Club on the morning of Sep-
tember 13, 1944 when an Army Lt. met a Cadet
Nurse and spent a swell evening as guests of Don
McNeill. We had a wonderful time and we have
made future plans together.

Lt. Harry Eumont and Cadet Nurse Pat Murray."

Memory Time...*Around the Breakfast Club*

Our annual appearance with the boys on the program at Christmas time has come to be a memorable event in the McNeill household. We always arrive at the studio with butterflies in our tummies.

So many of you have requested copies of my letter to Santa Claus from last year's Christmas show that I've decided to reprint it here:

Dear Santa Claus:

I'd like to write you this year to tell you what I don't want.

I don't want another year of war, with its suffering and privations for so many peoples of the earth.

I don't want to ever shirk my responsibilities on the home front, so that our boys and girls on the fighting front will get the job done as soon as possible.

I don't want to ever squawk about little inconveniences such as rationing when I live in a land where the least of us is so abundantly provided for.

I don't want the families of boys in service, especially the mothers to forget for a moment that my heart goes out to them in their bravery, for I speak as a mother too.

I don't want the Breakfast Clubbers to ever cease being the most loyal audience in the world and neither do I want Don or myself or our family to forget how fortunate we are in knowing so many millions of you—families like ourselves.

Santa, I think my telling you what I don't want gives you a pretty good idea of what I do want.

Sincerely,
Kay McNeill





OLD FRIENDS REALLY CRIED . . .

April 24, 1944 was marked by fond farewells and moist eyes around the Breakfast table. That was the day Jack Baker said goodbye to Don and the program with which he had been associated for eight years.

The pictures on this page aren't exactly tear-jerkers, but they deserve a place of honor in the Breakfast Club's book of memories. The top one shows the gang giving Jack a merry farewell at the Merchandise Mart, while the lower photograph finds good old Baker trying to satisfy all the autograph seekers in the capacity farewell audience.

Little 13-year-old Maxine Mulligan of Ken-

more, N. Y. made us all re-live the tender good-byes we paid Jack when she wrote:

"I suppose you have received many letters from Jack Baker's fans after he left. Being thirteen years old is sometimes very trying because there is so much you cannot understand. The war is one of these things. When our fathers and brothers go to fight, and maybe don't come back, it leaves us a little bewildered.

"Perhaps the east of the Breakfast Club doesn't realize it, but they have become what you might, call an American Institution. With jokes to cheer up those who are feeling blue and thoughtful things that make even a young person like me sit quietly for a while. Inspiration Time has often helped me to learn important lessons that aren't found in textbooks. I am very grateful."



INVASION ON! ALLIES IN FRANCE

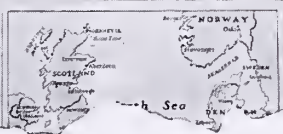
Witness Tells
How Invaders
Hit Beach

Little Opposition
Reported Along
Miles of Coast

BULLETINS

London, June 6, Tuesday—Reuters—Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's first communique on the invasion said:
"Under command of Gen. Eisenhower, Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France."

London, Tuesday, June 6, 1944—Reuters—Major General Bernard Montgomery said in his first communique on the invasion:
"The invasion force has landed on the northern coast of France."



Assault Led
By Paratroops

Dummy Parachutists
Nazis Guessing

Tuesday, June 6, 1944 dawned as just another day in the McNeill household. Before we as much as had a sip of coffee, our smug little world was turned topsy-turvy by a news bulletin we all knew was inevitable, but which we never thought we would be quite ready to receive.

"Under command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France."

That was all . . . just a few dramatic words . . . they said so much and yet they left so much much unsaid. I looked at Don. He started to say something, but only managed to mutter, "This is it!" patted the boys' arms, kissed me goodbye, and dashed for his car.

On the way down to the studio, he told me later, he began to formulate a fitting way to observe this important day. Before he reached the highway he felt he had the formula. First, clear the way for the omission of commercials, play patriotic music, offer up a prayer, stand by for news flashes, and PRAY.

I'll always be proud of the way Don handled this impromptu assignment. Were you listening? Then you'll remember his appropriate Invasion Day prayer which he wrote fifteen minutes before he went on the air.

INVASION

"D" Day is here—the day of deliverance for men who would be free again—the day of liberation. While our first impulse when hearing this glorious news—that the long awaited hour has finally arrived—is one of exultation and thrills, when we stop to

ponder for a moment . . . the tremendous implications of what is now happening, we pause . . . we pray.

For after all, we have supreme confidence in the military abilities of the thousands of men who are now engaged in the process of liberation. There is nothing we can do this day, besides carrying on our chosen part in the furtherance of the war effort here at home, but there is one tremendous, vital, necessary and wonderful thing we CAN do for them . . . something every mother's son over there needs as much as his military equipment this day.

You mothers, sweethearts, fathers—all of you who have someone near and dear to you this day over there—and the rest of us, too—every loyal believer in our cause of righteousness—MUST PRAY TODAY—that we can all do. Those of us who are incapacitated who cannot even leave our beds . . . here, you shut-in Breakfast Clubbers must lead us today—in prayer.

LET US PRAY

O, Great God of Justice! Watch over them today. They have waited so long for this—their hour. You too, dear Lord, had Your hour of pain and suffering before deliverance. May all of our brave sons and daughters, with Your Divine Help have the same fortitude and understanding to keep their spirits in legion with Yours. Until they, too, may see that glorious hour of enlightenment for all men, for which we fight. God, we trust in Thee. We leave our sons with Yours this day. Smile down on them in Thy mercy. We need You, today.

They Also Serve . . .

Ever since Pearl Harbor, the Breakfast Club calendar has been crowded with extra-curricular activities. Typical of the gang's war contributions, are the events pictured on these pages.

The entire cast appeared before hospitalized bluejackets at the Great Lakes Training Station on several occasions. Our cameraman brought back two mementos of one visit—Marion autographing a leg cast, and Lt. Eddie Peabody welcoming Don to the station. The other picture on this page was taken at Fort Benjamin Harrison, near Indianapolis.

When Don was invited to M.C. the President's Birthday Ball at Jacksonville, we decided to spend a few extra days soaking up Florida sunshine. It was only the second real vacation Don has taken in 11 years of broadcasting.

The trip was full of thrills, including the midnight visit of two mice to our compartment, and Don's early morning unscheduled personal appearance in the train berth, before a station platform full of people. He says he will never forgive me, but can I help it if I can sleep only when all the shades are raised.



Every organization these days has its Honor Roll, and the Breakfast Club is no exception. Harry Kogen . . . Order a roll on the drums while we salute our heroes.

Durwood Kirby.....Announcer.....Navy
 Bob Brown.....Announcer.....Navy
 Bob McKee.....Announcer.....Army
 Louie Perkins.....Romeos.....Army
 Art Hansen.....Saxophone.....Army
 Ralph Martire.....Trumpet.....Navy
 Don Tiefenthal.....Arranger.....Army
 Bruce Chase.....Violin and Arranger Navy
 Jack Cordaro.....Saxophone.....Navy
 Jack Shirra.....Bass.....Navy
 Bob Morton.....Saxophone.....Army
 Tim Filas.....Saxophone.....Army
 Bo Kreer Writer.....Marines

Several others have returned after being honorably discharged.



In spite of his sacroiliac, Don bends in the middle as he accepts Lt. Eddie Peabody's introduction to the bluejackets at the United States Naval Training Station at Great Lakes, Ill.



Mayor Kelly of Chicago assisted Don in rewarding the little lady and the young gentleman shown in the photograph above for collecting more salvage than any other children of the Chicago area. Don and the Breakfast Club can be credited with originating the National Paper Salvage Drive for Children.

Serious and critical though the subject may be, Don couldn't help but kid the wastepaper campaign by contributing his bit. He said it was the script he had used that morning in complimenting Baker on an extra good performance.



Favorite Breakfast Club Stunts . . .

After reviewing the zany happenings—planned and ad libbed—which have taken place on the Breakfast Club for several years, it becomes very difficult to single out any one cham-

pion. However, with the help of my faithful assistants, who were asked to select their favorite stunts, I'm able to present on this and succeeding pages the ones most frequently mentioned.



One man band contest brought together Archie Sweet, who earns his living as the studio janitor, and other odd jobs (Don says he is "vice-president in charge of male hygiene") and Panhandle Pete of Grand Island, Neb., who has made his living as a one man band since he was seven. Paul Whiteman supplied the program notes. While Panhandle scored with his terrific rendition of "Wabash Cannonball," Archie was unanimously awarded the title of "world's WORST one-man band."

The payoff came when Archie paid the loser's price—an ounce of hair. Sam Cowling bragged for days after how he clipped him.



SAM...the falling man!

Television is eagerly awaited by most Breakfast Clubbers, for a common complaint we hear is "why doesn't Don tell us what sends the audience into hysterics so frequently." Don tries to tell all, but how can you explain what lies at the foot of this page—Sam Cowling.

The other picture is only the beginning.





High on the list of favorite impromptu stunts was the incident of the lady who answered Don's question of "And how are you this morning?" with "I'd be fine if it wasn't for the burning feet I picked up shopping on State Street yesterday." As the sketch indicates, she enjoyed the remainder of the Breakfast Club with her "hot dogs" at ease in a pailful of cool Lake Michigan water.

Anything to make the kiddies happy was Don's reason for installing a play-pen for tiny children in the audience. Sam Cowling lost no time in trying it out with pretty "babes"—Marilyn Sable of "Kiss and Tell" and Peggy Dake of "Good Night, Ladies."

"The mess of messes" which Mrs. Grier said she would liked to have seen was the "egg-shampoo for the lady's tresses"—reproduced here from memory "to see if she could take a yolk." Let this be a reminder that complaints regarding the amount of dirt in Chicago's air are promptly handled on the Breakfast Club.



Another famous *ad lib* stunt was the manner in which a sleepy soldier boy, who sat up on a train all night so he could hear the Breakfast Club, accepted Don's invitation to stretch out and make himself comfortable. Bill Krenz, our favorite pianist, obliged by playing sweet and low music.

Jack Owens carries on a Breakfast Club tradition started by Jack Baker—jitterbugging with lovely ladies of the audience. Sam comments that Owens has an advantage over Baker in this department because he croons as he cruises.





Now, in quick review we give you a last peek at your favorites with a bright new one thrown in for good measure.

Don and Jack Baker pose for old time's sake. After eight years of good-natured kidding it's a wonder either of them can still take a joke. There aren't many left to take, commented Jack as he shoved off.

The Cruising Crooner and Miss Nancy Martin swing out with a song that is mighty heartenin'. They make a toothsome two-some, don't they?





Marion and Sam look their admiration as the Breakfast Club premieres its newest find—Mary Ann Owens singing with her dad. You'll hear more from this little lady later, but soon!

You asked for it, so here it is. What did the soldier say? While interviewing a soldier one day, or was it a sailor, Don asked the question: "What have those two young couples in common?"

Previously, he had selected two cards (from among those always filled out by the audience before they enter the studio) which stated that two couples were visiting the Breakfast Club on their honeymoon. Without announcing this fact, Don asked the two couples to arise.

Picking a sailor, or was it a soldier, from the audience he asked the famous question. When he observed a funny, shy look creep over the sailor's face he pulled the portable microphone behind his back and the reply didn't go out over the air.

Here's what he said: "Are they expecting?"





Kay Dear:

You've told it all . . . and you've told it well;
 From cover to cover I think it's swell.
 You've proved you're smart with a high I. Q.
 But I wasn't so dumb when I picked you.

You've shown our Breakfast Clubber friends,
 My "other life," and so it ends.
 Some of it's fiction, some of it fact,
 But nothing's there that I'll retract.

What you've put up with all these years,
 Deserves a medal and three cheers.
 I guess you know just how I feel,
 So "be good to yourself," signed,

Don McNeill



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